

The Mbahsb 661

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Wrapped in the quilt, Janet reached out to turn on the light and then sat up to look at Brandon.

Smiling brightly, she asked, "Why are you so scared? I'm not going to hurt you or anything."

Her lighthearted, euphemistic voice made Brandon's ears turn even redder.

He didn't raise his head and refused to look at the woman next to him.

Clutching the quilt tightly, he felt a little depressed. He had never felt so helpless before.

"Did you want to say something to me?" Janet asked curiously, tilting her head to the side.

With a tense look on his face, Brandon finally raised his eyes to look at Janet, albeit hesitantly. He uttered, "You... Please don't... I..."

Seeing that he couldn't even finish his sentence, Janet was amused. She shook her head helplessly, turned off the light, and lay down with her back to Brandon.

She then said softly, "Alright, I promise I won't tease you again. You have work tomorrow. Good night."

After that, Janet didn't say anything more.

Brandon breathed a sigh of relief. In the darkness, he looked at Janet's outline quietly. Too many doubts flashed through his mind.

What kind of person was she?

And how did they used to interact?

To Brandon's frustration, he still couldn't remember anything. His head was filled with a thousand questions, but he couldn't just wake Janet up and ask her without her finding out about his memory

loss. In the end, he had no choice but to lie back down on the very edge of the bed, tucked himself in, and closed his eyes.

The rainstorms of early autumn were over, and winter quietly crept in.

Brandon awoke to the sound of the strong winds beating against the window. When he got up to close the window, the delicious aroma of breakfast attracted him.

He subconsciously glanced back at the empty bed. Only then did he realize that Janet was not in the room.

After quickly washing up, he trotted downstairs.

It was a windy day, but there was no sign of rain. The sun was still bright outside.

With an apron on, Janet set two cups of milk on the table and then went back to the kitchen to prepare the food.

Brandon mindlessly followed her into the kitchen.

Janet was making sandwiches for breakfast. When she heard footsteps behind her, she turned around and smiled, "Good morning, sunshine! Go wash your hands. Breakfast is almost ready."

Brandon was stunned for a few seconds. For some inexplicable reason, he felt that this scene was so familiar, as though he was experiencing *deja vu*.

He thought about it long and hard. Janet's busy figure gradually overlapped with that of his mother in his memories.

Sylvia used to make him breakfast before he got up.

The smell of delicious food in the early morning, the woman's blurred face, and the familiar sound of cooking up a storm in the kitchen. This scene felt very familiar to him, but Brandon couldn't remember anything more.

His memory was too blurred. And whenever he tried to make it clear, he'd feel a dull pain in his head.

Noticing his absent-mindedness, Janet waved her hand in front of him and asked, "Brandon? What's on your mind? Come on. It's time for breakfast."

Brandon's eyes gradually became clear. He nodded slightly and followed her to the dining table.

There were sandwiches, bacon, eggs, and milk on the table—a beautiful breakfast spread.

"Here you go." With a smile, Janet handed him a glass of milk.

Brandon accepted the glass with both hands and said awkwardly, "Oh, thank you."

Janet gestured at the food on the table and urged him, "Taste it. I hope my cooking skills didn't worsen while I was away."

Brandon nodded. He slowly picked up a sandwich and hesitantly took a bite.

The food Janet cooked was nothing special, but it tasted good. The meaty chicken and the crunchiness of lettuce mixed perfectly. There was no extra seasoning, but it was still a tasty and refreshing sandwich. Brandon's heart felt warm while he ate it.

"It's delicious." He praised from the bottom of his heart.

He hadn't eaten such a good, home-cooked meal in so long. This made him feel for the first time that the word "home" was not so far away from him.

The smile in Janet's eyes didn't fade away. After she finished the last of her milk, she winked at Brandon and said lightly, "As usual, I cook and you wash the dishes."

Brandon nodded obediently. He didn't think it was an unreasonable request. In fact, he even felt as though he had done this chore many times. But he had no idea when he did it and why he agreed to do chores in the first place.

Despite the blanks in his mind, Brandon truly enjoyed the familiar feeling of a having a hearty breakfast. Suddenly, his phone started to ring.

It was Charis calling.

“Brandon, why aren’t you at the office yet? Did something happen?” Her voice was full of concern.

“I’m okay. Don’t worry about me. You go ahead with the work.” Brandon took a sip of milk. He gave her brief orders and then hung up.

It was the first time that he had put aside his work for something else. Instead of rushing to the company, he finished breakfast with Janet unhurriedly and even washed the dishes afterwards.

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Clenching her teeth, Charis put her phone away. She couldn’t conceal her jealousy and anger any longer.

Brandon had just gone back to live with Janet for one night, and today, he was late for work.

Charis took a deep breath and then proceeded to walk into the office as if nothing had happened.

But deep inside, she knew that things were getting out of hand.

Previously, Charis was secretly elated when she saw that Janet kept pestering Brandon.

She knew that Janet’s insistence would only push Brandon further and further away. And just as she had expected, the more Janet tried to reach out to Brandon, the more obvious his aversion to Janet grew.

Everything was going smoothly until Janet proposed to divorce Brandon.

When Charis heard her say this, she was ecstatic.

She couldn’t believe her ears. She hadn’t even done anything to separate them yet, but Janet actually took the initiative to leave Brandon!

But when Charis came to her senses, she immediately realized that what Janet wanted was not that simple.

Janet didn’t really want a divorce. She just wanted to threaten Brandon with it!

During Janet’s negotiation with Brandon, Charis secretly stood outside the door and heard everything clearly.

Janet threatened Brandon with the power of the White family and the potential alimony should they divorce, asking him to fulfill his duty as a husband.

This move caught Charis completely off guard.

Brandon and Janet were legally married. It was reasonable for Janet to ask him to perform his duty as her spouse. As an outsider, Charis had no grounds to interfere.

Seeing that Brandon was going to live with Janet again, Charis grew anxious but didn’t know how to stop it. If things went on like this, everything she worked for would be for naught. Back then, Brandon married Janet, lived with her, and slowly fell in love with her. Of course, the same thing could happen once more.

After talking to Brandon on the phone just now, Charis grew even more restless. Brandon had always put the company first. He had only stayed with Janet one night and yet he already started to change!

No matter how hard she racked her brains, Charis couldn't think of a good way to drive a wedge between Brandon and Janet. She had learned from her previous mistakes that if she interfered too much, Brandon would see right through her.

Now that things had come to this point, she could do nothing but remind herself that she should be patient and not act rashly.

After living with Brandon for a few days, Janet found that he seemed to have completely forgotten the way they got along with each other before.

But she decided not to think too much about it. Whether Brandon intentionally concealed something or there was an inside story, she was willing to continue this act with him until he came clean.

Having spent more time with him, Janet had figured out the rules of getting along with this new Brandon. She realized that this Brandon didn't like it when she got too close to him. Only by keeping a certain distance from him could she keep his interest.

Until now, Janet was on leave from W Marks, so she asked if she could work remotely. Her boss agreed and immediately gave her a bunch of tasks. Since then, she had become too busy to bother Brandon.

The design task was urgent. Because Janet got into an accident and was away for weeks, her work had been delayed. In order to get back on track, she had to shut herself in her room every day, burying herself in work until late at night.

When Brandon got home from work, he didn't see Janet in the living room.

He didn't think too much of it. He just took his briefcase to the study to continue working. When he passed by the bedroom though, he heard some noise inside.

Brandon opened the door a little and peeked inside. He saw through the crack that Janet was hard at work.

He couldn't help but stop and look at her for a while before gently closing the door.

Over the next few days, although they lived under the same roof, Brandon didn't see much of Janet. Right after breakfast, she'd retreat to the bedroom to work until bedtime.

Brandon gradually found that the real Janet was nothing like what Charis had said. She wasn't a clingy, love-struck woman. Janet was ambitious and devoted to her work.

After returning to his study, Brandon turned on his computer and searched for Janet White on the Internet.

Brandon had secretly looked into her background and saw that Janet's talents and capabilities were outstanding. Moreover, she once worked in the Larson Group. And right after leaving the Larson Group, she worked in W Marks Studio as Draco Wesley's design assistant.

Janet poured over her work for days on end. And Brandon gradually got used to coming home every night. He soon grew relaxed even when sleeping in the same bed as Janet.

One day, Brandon impulsively bought two strawberry croissants when he saw them on display through the window of the dessert shop. On his way back home, he found himself wondering how Janet would feel when she saw such beautiful desserts.

However, when Brandon got home, Janet was nowhere to be found. She wasn't in the bedroom or the living room or anywhere of the house.

He waited for her until late at night but she didn't come back. The following morning, she still wasn't home.

For some reason, Brandon felt a bit bad.

He seemed to have grown used to this woman's quiet company. Without her, he felt as if he had lost something very important.

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Brandon took out his phone and called Janet at once.

On the other end, Janet was rather surprised that he would take the initiative to call her.

"Where are you?" he snapped as soon as she answered.

He soon realized how harsh he sounded, though. He cleared his throat and added in a much softer tone, "Why aren't you home?"

Janet was currently having breakfast. She leisurely took a sip of her milk before replying. "I was just about to tell you. I've come back to Barnes."

"What are you doing in Barnes?" Brandon asked, obviously unhappy.

It made Janet burst into laughter. "I work here, so it shouldn't be that surprising. I've been working remotely in the last few days, but it's far from convenient. If I continued to stay in Seacisco, my career would suffer eventually."

Brandon opened his mouth to express his grievance, but found that he didn't know the right words to say.

After floundering for a couple of seconds, he decided not to say anything altogether. Even so, a menacing scowl appeared on his face, and his fingers tightened around his phone.

"Fine," he breathed before hanging up and brooding by the window.

Since that day, Brandon devoted most of his time to work again.

He told himself repeatedly that it was a good thing that Janet was gone. He could finally focus on his business, just how it should have always been. Even so, every time he came home at night and found that there was no one to welcome him, a wave of loneliness would wash over him. He often went to bed feeling empty and upset.

It was a cold and rainy day in Seacisco. Autumn was coming to an end. The electric fireplace crackled in the living room, obscuring half of Brandon's face as he sat at the dining table.

He felt as though he was slowly drowning in the desolation that filled his heart, much like the storm that was raging outside.

He stared at the flower sitting on the mantel, the lace cloth covering the table, and the photos hanging on the wall. These were tiny, inconspicuous details that were easy to ignore, but they particularly stood out to Brandon.

Janet had only lived here for several days, but she had left traces of her everywhere. Now that she was gone, he slept alone and ate alone. Brandon found that he was rather unaccustomed to it now.

He heaved a mournful sigh. Even the breakfast spread before him was tasteless and unappetizing.

Having enough of the strange and indescribable emotions that were tormenting him, Brandon decided to move back to the hotel near the company.

He only returned to the villa once a week. And each time, he would be looking forward to seeing Janet cooking at home, waiting for him. She would greet him with that bright smile of hers, and then urge him to wash his hands before telling him that dinner was ready.

It was nothing special, really, but his expectations never came true. To say that he was disappointed would be a gross understatement, but the hope would rekindle again the following week.

Deep down, Brandon knew that he had changed. He could barely concentrate on work. He missed Janet terribly, though he wasn't fully aware of the extent just yet, and how much it affected every other aspect of his life. He had even begun paying attention to the goings-on in the fashion industry. Despite this, he never made contact with her again.

One day, Garrett called to inform him that there was something wrong with the project being handled by one of their branch offices in Barnes. He was suggesting that Brandon deal with it himself.

"I heard from Garrett that it isn't that big of a deal. The project manager merely asked for a leave of absence in the middle of the operations. I think sending an experienced project manager to take over it should be enough to settle the matter. Besides, Garrett is already in Barnes. You don't have to go there yourself. It's a rather long and tedious trip, too. It would be a hassle to go back and forth between Seacisco and Barnes. Just let them handle this." Charis was determined to stop him, of course. She remained calm throughout their conversation, but she made sure to lay down every point she had at her disposal.

"Our projects in Seacisco have been coming along swimmingly, so there's nothing to worry about. I haven't been to our branch company in Barnes in so long, anyway, so this would be a good opportunity for me to inspect their work." It was clear that Brandon had already made up his mind.

He told himself that it wasn't as if he had any personal agenda; he was only going to Barnes for work.

That was all. He certainly wouldn't be going there to see Janet.

The Larson Group's private jet landed at Barnes late in the evening.

As soon as he got off the plane, Brandon headed straight to his villa.

To his dismay, he arrived to find that Janet wasn't there, either.

He immediately called Sean. "Is my wife not residing in our villa in Barnes?"

Sean was speechless for a moment. "Mr. Larson, I'm afraid I have no idea. Perhaps Mrs. Larson is living with her parents."

Brandon hung up without another word and called Janet.

She sounded like she was just about to sleep. "What's up?" she asked with a loud yawn.

"Where are you staying?"

"With my parents, of course."

Brandon huffed in dissatisfaction. "Didn't you say it yourself that we are a couple and that we should be living together? You must come to my villa and stay with me."

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After the call ended, Janet had to press her face against the pillow to keep herself from laughing too hard.

She realized that Brandon had developed a knack for blowing hot air when he had to say something embarrassing.

A while later, Johanna saw her daughter coming downstairs with a huge grin, and then she glanced at the suitcase in her hand. "You've packed since day one. Are you finally leaving now?"

"Things are going more smoothly than I initially thought," Janet replied. "I still don't know what happened to Brandon, but things seem to be getting better."

"Well, it only goes to show that you've made the right choices," Johanna said kindly as she reached out and pinched Janet's cheek. "It's getting late and I'm afraid it won't be safe for you to take a cab alone. How about I ask our family chauffeur to drive you there?"

Janet didn't even try to refuse. "Okay."

Johanna saw her daughter off and reminded her to take care of herself.

Just before she got into the car, Janet turned to her mother and said in a somber tone, "Mom, can you do me a favor?"

Just like that, Janet moved back into Brandon's villa in Barnes.

Since she was now living with him, he naturally spent more time at home.

He rarely went to work on weekends and just stayed with Janet instead.

She couldn't help but reminisce the time when they had just been married. The only difference was that Brandon now seemed more introverted and reserved than he had been in the past.

Janet studied the man sitting across from her on the balcony, reading. She went into a trance, feeling like she had been transported to two years ago.

Brandon never returned to Seacisco, not even for a quick visit. Needless to say, Charis was on the edge.

She hadn't seen him in over a week. She had always been around Brandon until recently, so she was able to keep an eye on him. Now that he was in the same city as Janet, she was rapidly spiraling into a panic.

On the second weekend, Charis flew to Barnes under the pretext of inspecting the progress of their company's ongoing project. She deliberately brought some documents with her and took them to Brandon's villa.

He was visibly surprised when he opened the door. "What are you doing here?"

Charis already had an answer prepared for this very question. She held up the stack of papers to him. "I'm here to send you these files. We need them for Monday's meeting. It's urgent, so you'd better deal with them right away."

"All right," Brandon said indifferently as he took the folders from her. "You can head back now."

Charis mustered a small smile and asked, "Aren't you going to invite me in?"

Her heart ached at his dismissive attitude, but she did her best not to show it.

It wouldn't be polite to turn her away at this point, so Brandon sighed and said, "Please come in."

Charis entered without a second's hesitation.

After all, her real purpose for coming was to see how things were going between Brandon and Janet.

As soon as she stepped inside, she spotted Janet lounging on the sofa in her pajamas, munching on an apple while watching TV.

She looked back at the sound from the door and called out, "Do we have company? Are we expecting anyone today?"

Janet was addressing Brandon, but her eyes locked on Charis.

With a bright smile, Janet tilted her head to the side and asked, "What brings you here, Miss Turner? Don't you take a break even on weekends?"

"I came to relay some important documents to Brandon," the other woman answered calmly. "I thought it would be nice to pay you a visit while I was here."

"Oh." Janet raised her eyebrows and gave her another faint smile. Then she went back to her apple and continued watching television. She had no interest in talking to Charis any more than was necessary.

Brandon walked toward the staircase. He was going to his study to take care of the work that had just been dumped on his lap. He passed by the sofa on his way and noticed that Janet was leaning closer and closer to the TV. He lightly knocked a folder against her head.

“Don’t get so close to the TV. You’re going to damage your eyes.”

Janet rubbed the spot on her crown and glared up at him. “Yes, yes, I know already!” she grumbled.

It was an innocent and ordinary exchange, but Charis found it incredibly alarming.

Had these two been getting along so well in such a short amount of time? Their relationship had been terrible just a while ago. How did things change so fast?

Although Brandon and Janet weren’t so intimate and sweet as they had been before, they still looked like a real couple now.

Charis knew she would be done for if she still failed to separate them. Brandon was obviously in love with Janet again. If this continued, all of Charis’ efforts would be in vain.

She was at a loss. After Brandon disappeared upstairs, she murmured an excuse and fled the villa.

Charis was in a thunderous mood on her way back.

She couldn’t think of any other way to possibly alienate Brandon from Janet.

Clearly, inciting any form of discord between them wasn’t a permanent solution. As long as Janet was still alive, Charis would never have a chance to be with Brandon.

Her only option now was to kill the woman. Charis needed to get rid of Janet once and for all.

Charis gritted her teeth at the thought, her nostrils flaring. She knew she was running out of time. She needed to act while she still had Brandon’s trust.

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Most areas turned hot and dry in late autumn, so it was fairly easy to have natural fires here and there.

Charis was sitting in her car when several fire engines sped past their vehicle. The driver informed her that there was a massive fire over at Forest Park.

Charis eyes suddenly lit up as something clicked in her head. She remembered the unexpected fire that had broken out when Brandon and Janet were still living in their apartment in Seacisco last year.

She wasn’t there at the time, but she had heard from the employees in the company that it was quite an incident.

“I heard from the news that the fire is still spreading rapidly,” the driver said, shaking his head in regret. “It’s the most terrible kind, I tell you. The one that burns its victims beyond recognition.”

Now, wouldn’t that be the most ideal way to dispose of a body?

Charis stared at the fire engines disappearing in the distance, an idea slowly brewing in the back of her mind.

It wasn't that difficult to carry out an arson, not really. Moreover, this type of crime had an incredulous success rate in wiping out entire villages, and clues to the cause of the fire were often buried in the ashes. The key was to find a good opportunity to strike.

Halloween was just around the corner. Barnes was a very open city that welcomed foreign students and workers from all over the world. Although Halloween wasn't part of the locale's tradition, people still liked dressing up and going around in costume to have some fun. The festive atmosphere was already taking over the streets as party goers came out of their houses in colorful and interesting outfits. Janet found the sight rather amusing, and she was in high spirits all the way home.

As hot as it was in the day, the evenings were relatively chilly. For so many years, she had lived alone and had gone through the changing seasons by herself. But things had changed. Now, she had Brandon waiting for her at home.

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Soon enough, he was there as soon as she stepped inside the villa.

He had just arrived as well, and hadn't even taken off his suit jacket yet. He looked as aloof as ever.

Unfazed by his cold demeanor, Janet strode over and took his hand.

Brandon promptly stiffened, his cheeks turning a faint color of red. "What is it?"

"It's Halloween season. We've been cooped up at home doing nothing this entire time. Why don't we go to the amusement park and try their haunted house? You'll go with me, right?"

She flashed him a dazzling smile, her tone sweet as honey.

Brandon cleared his throat and averted his eyes. "What a childish notion. Only kids go to the amusement park."

"But you should spend time with me during the holidays. It's your duty as a husband, and it's stipulated in the contract. So please, Brandon, won't you be a child just for one day?" Janet gave him the old puppy dog eyes.

"All right. But I'm only doing it this once. This won't be happening again."

He sighed audibly and acted like he was being forced to do something he didn't want.

In reality, however, he was looking forward to going out with Janet.

He had found that he had never felt bored around her. As long as they were together, he was willing to go along with her whims, even if it entailed childish and embarrassing things.

Charis had planned to ask Brandon out for a little get-together on Halloween. After all, she was alone in Barnes, without any relatives or friends to hang out with. Brandon was the only person she knew around here.

And so, she was a little disappointed when she showed up at his villa and found out that Brandon was going to the haunted house with Jenet on Halloween.

It took her a moment to compose herself. When she finally calmed down, her thoughts began to race.

This might be the chance she was waiting for.

The haunted house was an enclosed space with a labyrinthine setup and a generally weird atmosphere. The staff would definitely be putting on heavy make-up and wear costumes, completely concealing their identities. What's more, the haunted house was dark and noisy. It was the perfect setting for an unfortunate accident.

The only problem was that Brandon was also going to be there. He was bound to get hurt in the fire as well. First, Charis needed to figure out a way to separate the couple. Once Jenet was left alone, only then could she fully execute her plans.

But Charis had to be there, too. On the one hand, she needed an alibi to clear any suspicions that may arise in the future; on the other, she must make sure that nothing bad happened to Brandon.

"Oh, well, you know what they say. The more, the merrier, right?" Charis piped up cheerfully. "I was planning to organize a party for our employees on Halloween, anyway. Why don't we hang out together and have some fun?"

Brandon didn't think it was a big deal, so he readily agreed. "Sure, I have no objection." But then he immediately turned to Jenet and asked, "What do you think?"

Jenet glanced sideways at Charis before smiling. "Of course. The more, the merrier, indeed."

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When the day came, Brandon and Janet went to the largest amusement park in Barnes and headed over to the famous haunted house attraction.

Most people were dressed as monsters and witches, and they wandered merrily in the streets, reveling in the festivities.

Before leaving the villa, Janet had prepared a few bags of candies for children who might be trick-or-treating.

Sure enough, they ran into the kids at the amusement park. She happily handed them the goodie bags and praised their costumes. When she straightened, she caught sight of Charis looking at her in faint disdain.

“Miss Turner, didn’t you say that you would organize a party for your employees here? Where are they? How come there’s only the three of us here?” Janet was on high alert.

Except for Brandon and Charis, there was no one else from the Larson Group had joined them.

Charis had lied, of course. She didn’t intend to involve her staff in the first place, since they would hinder her plans.

She chuckled awkwardly and looked away. “Well, they’ll be here a little later. I haven’t been to this place before. As their boss, I thought it would be best for me to check the safety policies of the establishment in advance. Some of them are very timid, you see. I wanted to speak with the management of the haunted house and see if they could tone down the horrors they offered. It might spook my team and cause an accident.”

She clapped her hands and smiled at them. “And on that note, I’ll go and look for the manager now. You and Brandon don’t have to wait for me. Go ahead and enjoy yourselves.”

Janet didn’t need to be told twice. She turned to Brandon and said, “Let’s hurry inside. There will be too many people if we dally a much longer.”

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Brandon was looking around in curious amazement. He had never been to such a place before. Hearing what she said, he nodded at Janet and took her hand. They walked into the haunted house together.

Charis watched them go. Once they were completely out of sight, she discarded her mask of courtesy, and her face twisted in utter hatred.

Long before they had arrived at the park, Charis had already made the necessary arrangements.

She had sent someone to the haunted house to hide and wait for the perfect timing. His task was to separate Brandon and Janet. After getting the woman alone, he would then lock her into one of the rooms and set fire to the attraction, trapping her inside.

Given Brandon's current feelings toward his wife, Charis was convinced that he would never run into the fire to save Janet. Even if he did, Charis' henchman would be there to stop him.

The night grew darker, and soon, the moon appeared in the sky.

Less than ten minutes later, Charis received a message from the hired thug.

"Miss Turner, I've successfully isolated the woman. What should we do next?"

Charis replied immediately.

"Set the fire, right now."

No sooner had she sent the message than thick, black smoke rose from the direction of the haunted house. A mere few seconds later, the whole attraction was ablaze. The once fun and enjoyable park was now filled with the acrid smell of smoke and burning wood.

Screams of panic replaced the laughter that had been ringing out just moments ago as people fled the scene.

The manager in charge of the haunted house acted quickly. He called the fire department and the police, and then proceeded to evacuate the staff and customers who were still inside.

The poor people covered their faces as they ran out of the haunted house. One of them, a woman, spotted Charis standing by the entrance, seemingly in a daze. "Don't just stand there!" the woman shouted. "Run! The fire will be all over the place in ten minutes!"

Charis grabbed the frantic woman and asked, "What happened? What's going on in there?"

"Let me go! Are you out of your goddamned mind? Don't hold me up!" The woman was furious.

"My friend is inside!" Charis snapped impatiently. "Tell me what's happening in there!"

To her credit, the woman looked somewhat embarrassed after hearing this. "I don't really know. I was running for my life, so why should I care about anything else? But on my way out, I did hear that a woman is trapped in a room. And the men who came with her had rushed back inside to find her."

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Charis was stunned speechless. She clutched the woman's hand and demanded, "And then? Where is that man now? Is he all right?"

"Ouch, that hurts! Are you insane? How am I supposed to know what's going on inside when I'm already here?" The woman flung Charis' hand away and fled, cussing as she ran.

For a moment, Charis stood rooted to the spot.

Her eyes were clouded with panic and confusion.

She never expected Brandon to risk his life to save Janet in such a situation. He hadn't even been with Janet that long since he lost his memory!

Charis whipped out her phone and hurriedly called the man she had hired. The moment the call connected, she let out a litany of curses. "Didn't I tell you?! You should have separated those two! Can't you even do something so simple?"

The man's voice trembled slightly. "We followed your instructions, Miss Turner, we really did! But the corridors of this attraction are dark and narrow. As soon as the fire broke out, everyone just rushed to the exit. You can't blame us for losing that man in the middle of all the chaos."

Charis anxiously paced by the entrance of the haunted house. She told herself to calm down and consider her options. After a moment, she asked. "Do you at least know which direction he was heading for? Go and find him!"

The man's breath caught in his throat. "Miss Turner, that's impossible. There's no way for us to find someone in a raging fire. We are no firefighters. Besides, we have no idea where the gentleman has gone."

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"Fuck!" Charis screamed in frustration. She cupped her forehead, not knowing what else to do.

She looked back at the flames that were climbing higher and higher to the sky, as if to embody the rapid surge of her despair. Brandon might burn to death in the fire that she had instigated. Unable to bear the thought, Charis took off her coat and pulled it over her head, before rushing into the burning establishment.

She couldn't let anything happen to Brandon!

A steady flow of people were still fleeing the scene. When they spotted a woman running in the opposite direction, they naturally gaped at her like she had lost her mind.

Fortunately, Charis had familiarized herself with the structure of the haunted house in advance. As long as she didn't make any mistakes, she might be able to bring Brandon out unscathed.

Charis squinted her eyes in the dark, billowing smoke. It was like she had walked into a massive oven. She couldn't even tell whether her tears were from the heat or the smoke. Soon, Charis was gasping for air as she frantically looked around.

"Brandon! Where are you? Can you hear me?"

Her voice was getting hoarse by the second, but she wasn't able to locate him yet.

Suddenly, she spotted a figure dart across the sea of fire from out of nowhere. The woman's long hair was pinned up into a bun, her slender silhouette dashing nimbly through burning props and fixtures. It was Jenet.

Charis watched her run into a room to the side.

Recalling the blueprints, she recognized the room to be a small cubicle used by the staff. It only had one barred window, high up in the wall. The only way in and out was through the door. If Jenet were to be trapped inside, she would likely perish in the fire.

Charis stealthily dogged Jenet's footsteps, careful not to alert the latter. Once Jenet was firmly inside the small room, Charis hurriedly slammed the door shut and latched it from the outside.

Hearing the noise behind her, Jenet turned just in time to see Charis' face. She ran over and banged against the door, yelling, "Charis! What do you think you're doing?! Let me out!"

But it was too late.

Charis had no intention of ever opening the door. She let out a sinister laugh and taunted Jenet from the other side. "Shut up! Just stay there like a good little girl and quietly wait for your death!"

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[Chapter 668](#)

Janet desperately pounded at the door. "Charis! Open up!"

She tried the doorknob, but it wouldn't even turn. She was well and truly trapped.

Through the small glass window at the door, she could see Charis grinning viciously from the other side.

"You deserve this."

Behind Charis was a sea of fire. Even the ceiling was burning, and it looked like it would collapse at any moment.

But the woman seemed oblivious to all of this as she continued to cackle with glee, her eyes flashing with utter loathing.

Janet had never seen such a terrifying sight.

"You're the one behind this fire, aren't you?" Janet demanded. "Do you realize that you've committed a crime?"

"So what? What's there to worry about when no one else is going to find out?" Charis taunted. She was beside herself with joy. The thought that Janet would be burned to ash in this place was enough to make her want to throw a grand banquet.

Janet kept pounding at the door. She opened her mouth to say something, only to cough violently. She had inhaled too much smoke.

Charis stopped laughing long enough to spectate her rival's suffering. "I will finally be rid of you this time."

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Since it had come to this, Janet knew that Charis would never let her go. After all, it was her chance to kill Janet once and for all.

Janet clutched her throat. It felt rough and dry, but she couldn't stop coughing. "Charis," she rasped. "Once I get out of here, I'll definitely make you pay!"

Charis swayed from side to side, eagerly waiting for Janet to die. She couldn't remember the last time she had been in such high spirits.

"Oh, I'm afraid that day will never come."

It was getting hotter and hotter around them. Charis didn't want to waste any more time with Janet. It was getting dangerous, and she still had yet to find Brandon.

She took one last look at Janet and said, "Don't worry. I'll be sure to take good care of Brandon."

She turned on her heel and was about to leave when she heard a loud crash from the room Janet was in.

Charis' heart missed a bit. She hurried back to the door and peeked to see what was happening. The rails on the window were being yanked off from the outside. She could see the rope tied around the bars, and it was attached to a helicopter hovering above them.

Janet was about to get rescued!

Charis couldn't believe her eyes. It was her turn to pound at the door. "Who is it?! Who came for you?"

She didn't care about her own safety anymore at this point. Her stomach was filled with dread as she helplessly watched Janet escape.

It hadn't even been that long since the fire started. How could the woman have arranged for a helicopter so soon?

At last, the rails were completely removed, and a beam of light streamed into the tiny room. Shortly after, the first responder in full uniform was let down from the helicopter. He perched on the window sill and helped Janet crawl out of the smelly space.

Just before she left, Janet turned and addressed Charis calmly through the glass window. "You've tried to kill me so many times before. Did you really think I would just stand and wait for you to hurt me again?"

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[Chapter 669](#)

Not long after Janet returned to Barnes, she received a call from Brandon, asking her to move back into their villa.

She knew that since Brandon was in Barnes now, Charis would definitely follow him here. So she asked Johanna to monitor Charis' movements, lest an emergency arise.

Charis was always around Brandon, clinging to him like a parasite. As expected, she came to Barnes not long after he arrived.

Janet figured that Charis must be very anxious now. Given Charis's unrelenting personality, she wouldn't just sit and watch Janet get closer and closer to Brandon without doing anything.

Charis had visited their villa twice, but both times, she didn't say much, nor did she try to sow dissension between Janet and Brandon.

Janet had a bad feeling that something big was going to happen. Because Charis wasn't resorting to cheap tricks anymore, she was likely brewing big trouble behind the scenes. In fact, she was probably coming up with a plan to kill Janet directly.

Of course, Janet was just guessing, but she wasn't about to let things develop to a point of endangering her life. This wasn't the first time Charis had plotted against her, and she had come to learn that once Charis took action, her vicious plan would most likely implicate other innocent people.

Halloween was coming up and Janet asked Brandon if he wanted to go to a haunted house in the amusement park with her for fun.

When Charis heard about their plan, she suddenly announced that she also wanted to take her subordinates there, which took Janet aback. She was almost sure that Charis would take advantage of this opportunity to strike.

Therefore, Janet called Johanna two days before Halloween.

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"My people say that Charis has already contacted the staff of the haunted house. Charis is more cunning than she looks, Janet. Even if you want to get to the bottom of this, I don't want you risking your life," Johanna warned her.

“Don’t worry, Mom. That’s why I called. I want you to arrange for our men to hide in the haunted house to ensure my safety. I’ll take care of the rest.” Of course, Janet already knew just how cunning Charis could be. If she didn’t go into the haunted house, Charis wouldn’t be able to take action.

“Fine. I’ll prepare helicopters and rescue teams and station our men to stand by near the amusement park. But you still have to watch your back, okay?” Johanna didn’t know what Janet was going to do, but she believed in her daughter.

In fact, Janet was doing this not only to protect herself, but to catch Charis in the act. She was fed up with this boring game of cat and mouse. She wanted to get rid of this terrible woman once and for all.

On Halloween, not long after Janet and Brandon entered the haunted house, a staff member asked them to look for the cards for the decoders separately.

Janet walked forward while Brandon walked backward.

Not long after they parted, the smell of smoke came from the room in front of Janet. She wanted to head back, but unexpectedly, the path behind her was blocked by a sudden flame.

Janet didn’t panic. She understood that this was Charis’s plan.

It turned out that the evil woman wanted to burn her alive!

Janet calmly took out her phone and called the White family’s subordinates, who were hiding in the haunted house. “A fire has just started. The terrorist must still be in the area. Catch him.”

Their subordinates immediately took action as soon as they received the order.

Next, Janet called the helicopter to rescue her. As she spoke on the phone, she ran towards the only room with a window in the haunted house.

Just then, Charis rushed in.

This took Janet by surprise. She couldn’t understand why Charis would take such a big risk to come inside the burning establishment in person. Although the fire in the haunted house wasn’t too serious yet, now that she was inside, it would be difficult to escape. Moreover, it was a windy day in late autumn. The blazing flames could easily turn bigger and devour a person in the blink of an eye.

After Charis rushed in, she locked Janet inside the room, thinking that she would definitely die.

But to her horror, Janet had escaped from the window, whereas Charis herself was still trapped in the fire.

Charis was in a daze for a long time before finally coming to her senses. Only then did she realize that she had been set up by Janet!

She looked back at the corridor and found that the fire was even fiercer than before. She had wasted too much time just now. The fire surrounded her mercilessly. The scorching heat blurred her vision and the thick smoke clogged her throat. At this moment, the haunted house was like a living hell.

Would she make it out of here alive?

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[Chapter 670](#)

The dancing fire in the haunted house was blazing into the sky. The thick smoke and searing flames surrounded Charis, leaving her with no place left to hide.

Flustered and scared, she tried her best to find a way out.

All of a sudden, a scorched wooden beam right above her head creaked and then fell down. Charis screamed and dodged, rolling on the ground desperately.

It seemed that the haunted house was going to collapse on top of her. Charis stood up awkwardly and looked desperately at the woman who had just climbed out of the window. "You tricked me! You wanted to trap me in the fire to kill me, didn't you? You fucking bitch! You'll pay for this!"

Now, Janet was safe and sound whereas Charis was the one who was trapped in the burning building. How ironic.

Janet climbed up to the window, dusted her hands, and sneered coldly. "You asked for it!"

"You are so fucking vicious!"

Janet rolled her eyes. "I can't believe you have the gall to call me that. You're the one who hired someone to start a fire. You're the one who locked me in this room! Now you're the one who can enjoy the feeling of being burned to death!"

After that, Janet climbed up the rope ladder that led to the helicopter hovering above them.

She even cast a smug glance at Charis before leaving. "Bye!"

The helicopter took off and quickly took Janet to safety. The sound of the propeller echoed in the air.

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"If you were really a capable woman, you wouldn't have resorted to playing tricks on me! Fucking bitch!" Looking at the direction in which Janet's helicopter had flown away, Charis screamed in agony. She was left behind, and the smoke was getting thicker.

No, she couldn't sit still and embrace death!

Looking at the room she had just locked Janet in, Charis came up with an idea. She could escape from the window Janet had just opened!

However, as Charis tried to unlock the door with the key, she soon found that something was wrong. She couldn't unlock it! Anxiety and panic gnawing at her, she twisted the key so hard that it broke.

She stared blankly at the broken key in her hand and realized that the door had been locked from the inside.

"Damn it! That bitch! She even locked the door!" Charis threw the broken key on the ground and even stomped her foot angrily.

The flames were burning more and more fiercely with each second that passed, and the wood floor beneath her started to crack.

Charis rubbed her stinging eyes. As the temperature around her kept rising, she could clearly feel the burning pain on her skin.

She coughed and leaned against the wall of the corridor, trying desperately to find a place to hide.

The fire was so fierce that Charis couldn't see a way out. The haunted house was on the verge of collapsing. If she couldn't get out, she would definitely die here. She was still young and had a bright future ahead of her, but she might never see the sunrise again.

On the contrary, Janet would be able to live the rest of her days happily with Brendon.

Thinking about this, Charis grew desperate. She had to get out of here!

Just then, another huge wooden beam collapsed.

This was a load-bearing beam; she had nowhere to go now! The road behind her was completely blocked by this collapsed wooden beam.

Now, Charis was left with only two choices. Either she could rush out of the fire herself, risking third degree burns, or she could wait for the firefighters to rescue her.

Charis could feel her skin getting scalded from the heat. Gritting her teeth, she rolled up her sleeves and found that her once tender arms were already scarlet.

She had no time left to hesitate. She had to take a gamble.

It was better for her to take this matter into her own hands than to leave her life in the hands of others!

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